

DAILY EXPRESS
OPINION

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**The case
for the N-bomb**

NO OFFICIAL decision has yet been announced as to whether the Western alliance will deploy the neutron bomb in Europe.

The Daily Express believes there is a strong case for going ahead with this weapon, and that most of the critics have got it all wrong. True, it is a horrible weapon, but it is less horrible than others.

What is the neutron bomb? In essence, it is a bomb that relies on intensive radiation, rather than blast. In short it kills people rather than buildings.

Moreover, as we understand it, that radiation effect can be confined to a much smaller radius than can the combined blast and radiation effects of the 7,000 tactical nuclear weapons at present available to Nato.

In other words, it is a much more usable weapon, and therefore the threat to use it in response to a Soviet invasion of Western Europe will be much more credible, and therefore more effective as a deterrent.

Why do we need it? At the moment the West is torn between a nuclear response to Soviet invasion—which would result in so much devastation that it only makes sense in response to a Soviet nuclear attack—or a conventional response. And the fact is that Soviet conventional superiority—in terms of infantry, tanks and guns—is so great that Nato conventional forces would stand no chance.

So the brutal choice would be:
Either accept defeat or escalate the conflict to the nuclear level, i.e. commit suicide.

Ideally, the right policy would be to match the Soviets in conventional arms, and hold the nuclear arms simply as a deterrent to a nuclear attack. But that would cost too much money.

The N-bomb offers a way out. It is a battlefield weapon which could break up aggressive concentrations, without devastating a whole country. It would make Nato more effective, and thereby help to keep the peace. The West should go ahead with it.

**Treading
the barricades**

MISS VANESSA REDGRAVE, this year's best supporting actress in "Julia," is understandably out of favour in American Jewish circles for serving as narrator in a film called "The Palestinian."

With respect, they are very ill-advised to take the divine Vanessa seriously. Some actresses are beautiful, some can act, some like Miss Redgrave have both attributes, but they are not cut out for politics.

Miss Redgrave believes there is a great part in politics for her, comrade, and she has been talking like the Bernhardt of the barricades ever since.

Never mind yesterday's offensive remarks about "Zionist hoodlums."

What sort of person with the rudiments of a sense of humour or even of sense talks to a showbusiness bunfight about "the struggle against Fascism and oppression."

Poor Vanessa, how she would have enjoyed storming the Winter Palace and how magnificent she would have looked.

All the same you can see why actors used to be called "players."

SWANSEA FOLLIES

By JEREMY GATES

THEY dreamed it up in 1965, laid the foundations in 1969 and pressed the "start" button in 1973.

Five years, millions of pounds and thousands of bangles later the mighty computer at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre, Swansea, has assumed King Kong stature among Britain's 22 million motorists.

If anyone ever falls on the wrong side of that computer, everybody else may enjoy the joke... but the consequences can be deadly serious.

Ray Neall, perhaps, was one of the lucky ones. He got three hours in jail, a strip search and a court appearance yesterday—accused of stealing his own car.

Less fortunate was the man from Bath, who, although taking care to send the Vehicle Disposal Notification slip off his new log book to Swansea, suddenly found himself facing court proceedings in London. The summons was meant for the new owner.

M.P. Sir George Young asked Swansea what had happened to his vehicle disposal notification.

Resigned

"Information not yet processed," replied Swansea. On further probing, came the real answer: the slip had been put straight into the wastepaper basket.

"It means," says Sir George, with a resigned shake of the

head, "that drivers who have been filling in these forms to show change of ownership have been wasting their time. One person who has written to me faces 60 summonses since handing on her car to the guilty party."

Philip Hill did get fined—when he failed to produce the licence which was being processed by Swansea—and he opted to serve 14 days instead, on a point of principle.

The catalogue of confusion is endless: Cinema manager

Jim Thorne got four snorting letters demanding information about his Morris Minor—each unanswered because he drives a Vauxhall Estate.

Newly married Mrs Gillian Ranson of Luton advised Swansea of her new name adding "was Foden" (her maiden name) to make it clear.

The new licence was duly returned—in the name of Mrs Gillian Ranson was Foden.

Mrs Sally Oppenheim, Shadow Minister for Prices

**Computer
blunder
lands
driver
in cells**

**Councils attack
delays at car
licence centre**

It's a frightening pantomime that will run and run

and Consumer Protection notified her change of address seven months ago—and each of three parking tickets she has received since have gone to her previous address.

This particular foul-up 1 driving town hall staffs crazy. The police too are caught up in the general chaos a case after case has to be adjourned to await vital information.

Today, more than 440 stand in two units in the 16-storey DVLC are employed solely to handle 32,000 "inquiries and requests for information" a week from an irate public.

Error

It's all a far cry from those not so distant days when the whole business was handled—almost without a hitch—at the country's 183 local taxation offices.

And it makes it hard to believe the DVLC's estimate that the "serious error rate" is below one case in 100,000.

Conceivably the inside story may never be known. But the bald statistics, in part outlined by an angry Mr Edward du Cann in two reports from the Public Accounts Committee make a horrifying picture.

The original blueprint, back in 1965, envisaged total expenditure up to 1982 of around £100 million—and total staffing around 4,000.

Today the Centre is projected to guzzle £350 million up to 1982. At least, that's the official figure. Unofficially, projections now suggest expenditure closer to £400 million.

Last autumn, the number of jobs there had swollen to 5,300. Now they are listed at around 5,500.

No records exist of jobs correspondingly saved with the phasing-out of the local taxation offices.

Grim

"There have been no redundancies," says the DVLC. "Staff have been absorbed back into the local authorities."

"A few problems are bound to arise with a new system. Nevertheless, the new system offers definite advantages—for example in tracing a car owner. In fact, the old system could simply not have stood the strains of present demands."

To which Sally Oppenheim retorts: "The new system cannot stand the strain either."

But the grim fact is we are stuck with the Centre and its wayward computer—even though Transport Minister William Rodgers is on record as admitting several smaller centres might have done the job better.



Heroine Linda winning through for equal pay

WHEN Linda Pritchard's husband walked out, she was left with a school-aged daughter, little money and lots of problems.

Apart from the emotional shock, she had no idea of whom to turn to about money, legal problems, or general support.

Hundreds of women have to face this situation today, but Linda succeeds in handling it. And as the fictional heroine in a comic strip* story published yesterday, she explains how to cope.

She sells her house, get a new mortgage, tackles local councils, finds legal aid, lands a job and even gets equal pay by page four.

And all because she knows her rights.

According to Baroness Seear, who launched the booklet, not enough women do. And she, for one, is disappointed at the impact of the two-year-old Equal Opportunities Commission.

A grant from the Commission has enabled A.O. to be set up with Lady Seear

Lucky Linda points the way

as chairman. It is intended to have a limited life but an intensive one, feeding information to the public, bringing home to women the meaning of the new laws.

"What is the point in making life easier for women with these new laws if they don't use them?" asked Lady Seear.

"I think many women are confused and too frightened

to find out what their rights are, now the booklet tells them in the most simple terms."

One of the good things about A.O., says a member, Pamela Anderson, is that it is made up of voluntary women's groups.

"This means we can put a comic strip booklet out like this rather than get bogged down in a bureaucratic fact sheet that no one would be able to understand."

It seems most people now understand how to get equal pay, but few know their other rights and how to take advantage of them.

Lady Seear says: "When a woman is in a fix it is down to her to help herself and this booklet shows her how."

It also lists various local key organisations she should speak to for help.

Action Opportunity intends to turn our fictional heroine into a reality.

*Cartoon pamphlet obtainable from Action Opportunities, 17 Denbigh Terrace, London W11 2QJ, at 10p plus postage per copy.